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AUTHOR Pilo, Marvin R.
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ABSTRACT

System-wide school decentralization is now implemented both in New York City and in Detroit. It is important, therefore, to inquire into alternative explanations of the origins of the school decentralization movement with a view to constructing models of school organizational behavior and change which may have utility either to other school systems facing the decentralization question, or to other problems of organizational behavior. Two such models, the sequential and the organizational, have been proposed for these purposes. The sequential model postulates a sequence of key events leading to the decision to decentralize a school system. Its interesting implication is that the goal of the community control movement is greater citizen participation in organizational decision-making. The logic of the organizational model implies that greater authority for organizational decision-making be delegated to local administrators. What is at issue here is the distinction between community control and administrative decentralization. The tension between these two not necessarily compatible models for the restructuring of educational governance is at the heart of this paper, and at the heart of the disappointment with the results of school decentralization in New York City and Detroit now felt by many of its early proponents. (Author/JM)

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# SEQUENTIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS OF SCHOOL DECENTRALIZATION: NEW YORK CITY AND DETROIT

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Marvin R. Pilo
Department of Political Science
Clemson University

U.D. 014.14

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# SEQUENTIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS OF SCHOOL DECENTRALIZATION: NEW YORK CITY AND DETROIT

Marvin R. Pilo, Department of Political Science, Clemson University

System-wide school decentralization is now as fully implemented both in New York City and in Detroit as it appears it will be for some time. To be sure, modifications in systemic operation have been and will continue to be proposed, and some will even be adopted; but it now appears as if the current decentralized structure of each city's school system will persist for a significant period of time.[1] It is important, therefore, to inquire into alternative explanations of the origins of the school decentralization movement with a view to constructing models of school organizational behavior and change which may have utility either to other school systems facing the decentralization question, or to other problems of organizational behavior. Two such models, the sequential and the organizational, have been proposed for these purposes, and both serve as useful analytical tools in the cases of New York City and Detroit.

The basic elements of each of these two models are elaborated at length elsewhere,[2] and therefore need only to be summarized here. Basically, the sequential model is derived from a political systems perspective, and postulates a sequence of key events leading to the decision to decentralize a school system.[3] Scribner and O'Shea

maintain, based upon investigative study of events in New York City, Los Angeles, and Detroit, that several social and political factors unite to create the demand for school decentralization. First, of course, are changes in the demographic characteristics of the cities' population, and, in particular, changes in the racial composition of the public school student body relative to the racial composition of the city population. Second, low student achievement rates in inner-city schools, articulated as a political issue among parents, lead to demands for racial desegregation as a mechanism for improvement in student achievement. Third, O'Shea and Scribner contend that the frustration of demands for racial integration by the decision-making components of the political system results in the transformation of the demand for racial integration of public schools as a solution to the educational achievement problem, to a demand for some measure of community control over educational policy-making as a political solution to the shortfall in educational achievement. It is interesting to note here, as do Scribner and O'Shea, that this transformation of the black community's demands is concurrent with the emergence of the black power ideology as well as with the political maturation of a new cadre of black leaders socialized in various community action programs of the war-on-poverty. Finally, O'Shea and Scribner point out that the demand for community control begins to shift from one addressed to education officials to one addressed to partisan political leaders, and from the local to the state level of government. These shifts are accompanied by some unusual and fleeting political coalitions among participants interested in this policy arena.

The interesting implication of the above sequential model, drawn from its derivation from a political systems approach, is that the goal of the community control movement is greater citizen participation in organizational decision-making. The logic of the organizational model, based upon Thompson's Organizations in Action,[4] has quite a different consequence, one which may be inconsistent with that of the sequential model, namely that greater authority for organizational decision-making be delegated to local administrators. To simplify somewhat, what is at issue here is the distinction between community control (sequential model) and administrative decentralization (organizational model). The tension between these two not necessarily compatible models for the restructuring of educational governance is at the heart of this paper, and, I believe, at the heart of the disappointment with the results of school decentralization in New York City and Detroit now felt by many of its early proponents.

James Thompson elucidates the characteristics and corollaries of the organizational model in his already cited book. Since that book is itself, in large part, a synthesis of the work of other students of organizational behavior, a brief summary here hardly does justice to the cogency and value of his work. Nevertheless, certain aspects and implications of Thompson's model need to be explicitly stated with respect to their utility for the study of the organizational behavior problems inherent in school decentralization. Thompson posits that a major causal factor in organizational behavior is the need to minimize uncertainties. Organizations, in our case school systems, face these uncertainties at many

different stages in the performance of their tasks. One particularly important stage, for the area of school decentralization, is the changes in the nature of the organization's task environment. Specifically, school systems faced with increasingly heterogeneous clienteles, with rapidly changing sets of expectations and demands from students, parents, and other interested publics, and with having to act in political and social settings whose characteristics are themselves constantly changing, will be faced with the difficult task of seeking to reduce uncertainties so that they may behave according to norms of organizational rationality.

One method, Thompson suggests, of reducing uncertainties created by increasingly heterogeneous task environments, is through the mechanism of boundary-spanning structures. Ideally, the organization's goal is to subdivide a relatively heterogeneous environment into a number of comparatively homogeneous components, and establish functionally autonomous structural subunits to deal with these smaller components. When the range of variation in the larger task environment is particularly great and/or unpredictable, the organizational response is especially likely to be one of creating administratively decentralized organizational units, and this is particularly likely to occur during periods of significant environmental changes.

The applicability of these aspects of Thompson's organizational model to the decision to decentralize the school systems of New York City and Detroit is immediately apparent. Both cities were faced in the mid-1960's with major political, social, and demographic changes which held enormous implications for the governance of those cities' school systems.[5] Both cities have administratively decentralized

their school system governance, as Thompson's model predicted they would, although not quite in the way his model postulated. The implication of the organizational model appears to be that faced with a heterogeneous task environment, an organization would, on its own initiative create boundary-spanning structures to deal with environmental heterogeneity. Neither the educational decision-making structures of New York City nor Detroit, however, can fairly be said to have administratively decentralized their operations without the application of political pressure from elements of their respective task environments. Both New York City and Detroit decentralized their school systems only after the state legislatures of New York State and Michigan required them to do so. However, subsequent to the adoption of the legislation, both New York City's and Detroit's new educational governance structures have conformed, by and large, to the behaviors postulated by the organizational model, particularly with regard to transferring greater authority out to boundary-spanning structures and local administrators, whose crucial problem is adjustment to the constraints and contingencies in the task environment not controlled by the organization. These structures and local administrators are presumably better suited to deal with that task than are the central boards of education in New York City and Detroit.

The Sequential Model: New York City

As outlined briefly above, and in greater detail in the paper by O'Shea,[6] the sequential model of events leading to school system

decentralization is clearly applicable to New York City. Much has been written about the history of school decentralization in New York City, a good deal of which implicitly adopts the sequential model as its explanatory framework. In fact, since New York City was the first major city to face squarely and dramatically the problem of school system decentralization, the sequential model may be said to have been developed with the New York City experience in mind. If this is the case, it becomes an invalid and circular argument to test the validity and explanatory power of the sequential model with reference to events in New York City. Nevertheless, it is important to review the key circumstances, conditions, and occurrences in New York City to see if there are commonalities with the sequence of events in Detroit.[7]

Between 1950 and 1966, New York City underwent some major transformations in the characteristics of its population. In that period, some 1,200,000 mostly middle-class whites left New York City and were replaced by approximately 400,000 non-white minority group members. While this is certainly a dramatic demographic shift, minorities still represented only 27% of the city's population in 1960. But because of the increasing numbers of white children being sent to private elementary and secondary schools, the proportion of minority group students in the public schools reached 52% by 1960, nearly double the city-wide population percentage. This proportion has continued to increase, so that current estimates indicate that 63% of New York City's public school student body is black or Puerto Rican. The ethnic imbalance became even more apparent if one examined the situation relative to teachers and

administrators, for in 1967 only 11% and 2%, respectively, were black or hispanic. Interestingly, while the proportion of minority teachers has remained stable since 1967, the proportion of minority administrators has increased to 16.6% among principals and to 11.9% among assistant principals.

The single event which in New York City was most directly responsible for creating political demands for community control was the location and construction of a new school, Intermediate School 201 (IS 201) in the ghetto neighborhood of East Harlem despite the fact that the Board of Education had articulated a policy in 1965 requiring new school construction to be in areas that would not lead to all minority enrollments. IS 201 was to be located right in the middle of East Harlem, a Puerto Rican and Black neighborhood. To further exacerbate the problem, although two Puerto Ricans and one black were to be assistant principals at the new school, the principal was to be a white. When neighborhood leaders demanded of the Board of Education that it adhere to its pledge to foster integration in newly constructed schools, its response was to invite 10,000 white families in the Bronx and Queens, across the East River from East Harlem, to consider sending their children to IS 201. To no one's great surprise, there were no white volunteers.

It was in response to these events that the demands of community leaders were transformed from advocacy of racial integration as a means of improving student achievement, to an acceptance of racial segregation as long as there would be community control. As this idea matured in East Harlem, a parent-community council would be

created and granted power to hire and fire teachers as well as to participate in the process of curriculum development and evaluation. Clearly, what was being proposed was not administrative decentralization but community control: citizen participation in organizational decision-making. As the sequential model predicts, however, these demands for community control emerged only after attempts at racial desegregation had been frustrated by the educational decision-makers.

Initial negotiations with the Board of Education were futile in meeting any of the aspirations of the community control advocates, which not incidentally coincided in time with Stokely Carmichael's call for Black Power, and so by September, 1966, events took a more confrontationist turn. Demonstrators, who had earlier delayed the opening of IS 201, now attacked the appointment of the white principal Stanley Lisser, and demanded his replacement by a black male to head IS 201. Despite enjoying the support of his faculty, of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), and of the Council of Supervisory Associations (CSA), Lisser's position was no longer a viable one and he did resign eventually. The IS 201 incident was given substantial coverage in the news media in New York, and as a result, the frustrations and aspirations of the East Harlem minority community began to assume a place on the political agenda.

As early as 1965, the Board of Education had begun to consider a system of administrative decentralization by borough (New York City is composed of five "boroughs," each of which is coterminus with a county of New York State), but had rejected the idea in favor of a plan to delegate greater authority to the district superintendents of the approximately 30 local school districts created in 1960. But

by 1967, two events occurred which shifted the arena for the consideration of school system decentralization from one directed to education decision-making to one directed to partisan political leaders at the local, and especially the state, levels of government.

Mayor Lindsay's Budget Director Fred Hays had determined that if the amount of state education aid allocated to the city were determined on a borough-by-borough basis, New York City would thereby receive more funds than under the then-existing formula. Since state aid is geared to real property values, the highly valuable commericial properties in New York City's Manhattan had a depressing effect on the amount of financial aid received by the city when it is considered as a whole. On the other hand, if each of the five boroughs were considered as separate entities, each borough but Manhattan would gain in its share of state aid, and the overall increase in aid to the four other boroughs would more than compensate for the decrease in state aid to Manhattan. Thus, in February, 1967, Lindsay, like any other big-city mayor, always open to new ways to pry funds from the state legislature, petitioned that body to adopt Budget Director Hays' formula. Surprisingly, the legistative leadership at Albany accepted this proposal, but with one condition highly significant for the future course of events in the history of school decentralization in New York City. That condition was that the Mayor prepare a study of ways and means "to foster greater community initiative and participation in the development of education policy."[8] It was this mandate which caused Lindsay to create the Bundy Panel about whose work and recommendations so much has been written.

The second event which catalyzed the shift in demands for community control from the educational to the political arena was the Board of Education's decision, articulated in April, 1967, to delegate greater authority to the local superintendents and local school boards. While granted no binding authority, these local agencies were given consultative rights. More significantly, the Board of Education at this time authorized the Superintendent of Schools to recommend the creation of several experiments in community control. Although seven were proposed, only three (IS 201, Two Bridges, and Ocean Hill-Brownsville) were approved. So much has been written about the history of these demonstration projects that it is unnecessary to review that history here, and it need only be pointed out that they, particularly Ocean Hill-Brownsville, became the symbols around which the political battle for school decentralization was fought in New York. One partial teachers' strike, three city-wide teachers' strikes, and two state legislative sessions later, New City emerged on May 1, 1969, with a lengthy state statute prescribing school decentralization (not community control), and detailing the respective rights, obligations, and responsibilities of the Central Board of Education and the 31 Community School Boards.

The Sequential Model: Detroit

Not surprisingly, while aspects of the sequential model are applicable to the political development of school decentralization in Detroit, its utility as an explanatory framework is not as great as it was in the case of New York City. What is chiefly missing from the sequence in Detroit is evidence of frustration of

minority group demands for racial integration, a factor which had been a crucially catalytic one in New York City. Detroit's pre-decentralization Board of Education had probably the best record of any in a Northern city in dealing with the racial integration of its public schools. Much more important to the sequence in Detroit appears to have been the fact that decentralization was well on its way to implementation in New York City, as well as the attractiveness of the idea of community control to a black power ideology.

Detroit, the nation's fifth largest city, with a 1970 population of 1,610,000 persons, is also a town of ethnics. The city is now 48% black, and has sizable concentrations of Poles and Appalachian whites, three groups which do not get along well together, and the presence of which adds a component of racial and ethnic hostility to political and social issues.

In spite of the liberal and strong organizational potential represented by the AFL-CIO and the UAW, non-partisanship and at-large elections together with the salience of ethnicity in city politics, have combined to make Detroit's municipal government not as politically liberal as it potentially might be. Educational politics in Detroit, on the contrary, have traditionally remained free of this inherent conservative bias. The Detroit Board of Education has been consistently more liberal than, for example, the Detroit Common Council, largely because of the successful efforts of the liberal-labor Serve our Schools Committee, which, since 1949, has actively supported candidates for the elected school board. From 1949 to 1961, for example, that committee succeeded in electing 11

of the 14 candidates it endorsed. Its record from 1961 through 1970 has been similarly successful.

Several factors may be at work in explaining the comparative liberalism of Detroit educational politics. First, the influence of professionals is greater in proportion to that of elected officials in school politics in Detroit than in other aspects of city politics. Second, the traditional myth that education must be above politics because the interests of the schools' clients, the children, must take precedence over political considerations, has made it difficult for groups which usually oppose increased government spending and activism to do so in the case of school-related issues. Third, the comparatively high social and educational status of the business community, and its concomitant acceptance of the value of education, tends to limit its opposition to increased taxation for educational purposes. Finally, the AFL-CIO COPE and the UAW usually can better unite their members on school issues, since most of them are public school parents, than it can on other issues of city politics, where other considerations may operate in opposition to a generally liberal union posture.

Since 1964, the Detroit Board of Education has had a working majority of liberals, labor men, and blacks. That year, at the height of the civil rights movement, three members of the then seven member school board chose not to seek re-election. Detroit's liberal groups, focused around the Serve our Schools Committee, seeing their opportunity, nominated three men to run as a slate to fill the vacancies. The three, (Zwerdling, Grylls, and Stewart) who were elected,

soon formed a leadership nucleus on the Board of Education, and when then Superintendent Brownell, who had served since 1956, announced that he would not seek to renew his contract, Zwerdling was one of the key actors in the choice of a successor. He persuaded a majority of his colleagues to name, in July, 1966, Dr. Norman Drachler as acting superintendent. In March, 1967, the Board unanimously named him to the superintendency. Drachler had been assistant superintendent for community relations and had first entered the Detroit school system as a teacher in 1936.

Drachler's appointment was a fateful and prescient one for the integrationist majority coalition on the Board, because until November, 1970, the Detroit public school system, under Drachler's leadership and with the support of a majority of the Board, aggressively pursued a policy of racial integration, unrivalled in any northern city. From 1966 to 1970, the proportion of black school instructional staff rose from 31.7% to 41.2% (an increase of 1/3), and the proportion of black non-instructional staff rose from 41.6% to 58.2% (an increase of better than 2/5). All this occurred while the proportion of the student body which is black increased only by 1/8 (from 56.7% to 63.8%), and at the same time as the number of all-white schools in the Detroit system declined from 22 to 11.[9] Furthermore, Drachler appointed the first two black deputy school superintendents in Detroit's history, and took the lead in forcing publishers to adequately present Black-Americans in their school textbooks, and in forcing contractors doing business with the Detroit school system to employ a suitable number of blacks in executive and lower positions.

The movement for school decentralization in Detroit, although not in its present form, dates at least as far back as 1956 when the elementary schools were divided into districts. Then in 1957, on the recommendation of then Superintendent Brownell, two administrators were appointed to run two vertically unified (K-12) districts on an experimental basis. Also in 1957, the school administration initiated a system of ad hoc citizen committees, a form of community involvement, to achieve participation in the five areas of: school-community relations, school finance, housing, curriculum, and personnel. The following year, a "Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs" was established which recommended the creation of eight regional advisory school commissions and a central commission to consist of representatives from the regional commissions. Although this proposal was never implemented, the school system extended its previous experiment by creating nine vertically unified districts for administrative purposes.

In 1967, by which time Norman Drachler had become Superintendent, the district administrators became regional superintendents. Although they were given stronger staffs than they had previously enjoyed, it was not enough, and they still had little power. Furthermore, Drachler's free availability to community groups made the regional superintendents' community liaison function redundant.

1967 also marked the beginnings of demands for community control. The Inner City Parents Council, under the leadership of the Reverend Albert Cleague, Jr., a black congregationalist minister who, interestingly, had never been committed to integration, made the first such demands in June.

These demands began to bear legislative fruit in 1968 with the introduction of two decentralization proposals at the capitol in Lansing. One, offered by Jack Faxon, a Democratic representative of a white homeowners district in Detroit, was a moderate proposal to create new school regions with elected boards operating under central guidance, which died in committee. The second, offered by James Del Rio, a black Democrat who represented a poor ghetto district in Detroit, would have created 16 fiscally autonomous districts. Despite broad based opposition from the school board, the press (including the black newspaper, The Michigan Chronicle), the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT), and New Detroit, Inc., the bill was given a favorable report by the House Education Committee, although it failed to survive a later floor vote. Extra-legislative support for the Del Rio bill was limited to Rev. Cleague, and a few other black separatists.

Nevertheless, it was becoming clear that the movement for school decentralization was a force to be reckoned with. Thus in 1968, the School Board seized the initiative in the area when a school study group recommended that principals be given more authority to run their schools. This report served to co-opt the field on behalf of the Board for at least a year. However, the Board was unable to agree on how much power should go to the regions, and therefore did not act quickly enough for those who now were actively supporting the decentralization of Detroit's school system. These supporters were a heterogeneous group which included poor blacks, middle-class blacks (who would support decentralization if it were tied to integration), liberal whites with an ideological affinity

to poor blacks, and some members of the DFT.

By 1969, community control had become a salient issue in the black community. A city-wide group, called "Citizens for Community Control," was organized and, with the impetus provided by the Ocean Hill-Brownsville confrontation in New York City, held a series of conferences which included such participants as Rhody McCoy, the former administrator of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district. As in the previous year, Representatives Faxon and Del Rio introduced their respective decentralization proposals into the legistature, and these were again uniformly opposed by a wide variety of education interest groups for the same reasons they had opposed the earlier bills, with the additional factor that they feared confrontations such as had developed in New York City.

Meanwhile, the School Board continued to study proposals for decentralization. On April 8, however, the movement for decentralization received a major boost when the Detroit branch of the NAACP presented its own plan for community control of the schools, a plan which simultaneously retained the central city-wide Board. It called for a community board for each school and a constellation board for each of the 22 high schools in Detroit. The boards would have a majority of parent members, but would also include student and teacher representatives. Teacher negotiations and assignments would be conducted by the Central Board, but if a teacher or administrator were unsatisfactory to a local board, the Central Board would have to transfer him. The Central Board would allocate lump sums to the districts which would then have discretionary authority in budget within the limitations of the lump sum.[11] The school board members

received the NAACP's plan with thanks, but questioned how it could be worked out in practice.

Nevertheless, the Board was actively considering some kind of decentralization and, in an unusual move, then Board President Peter Grylls asked each member, at the April 22 meeting, to state his views on proposals for school decentralization. On May 13, the Board adopted a resolution to solicit opinions from a broad range of interested publics with a view towards developing a viable plan for school decentralization.[12]

Shortly after the Board adopted this resolution, however, the movement for decentralization returned to the legislative arena in Lansing when on April 8, 1969 then State Senator Coleman A. Young, now Democratic Mayor of Detroit, introduced Senate Bill 635, a proposal for decentralization of schools. With support from Young, the movement for decentralization gained momentum and a great deal more legitmacy in the legislature than it had when its chief sponsors were Del Rio and Faxon. Senator Young was a legislator respected by his colleagues, acknowledged as both an expert on educational matters and as the leader of the black legislators in Lansing. With his support, Senate Bill 635 was speedily adopted by the legislature and was signed into law by Governor Milliken on August 11, 1969. The approved bill did not represent a radical departure for Detroit. Its main effect was conceived to be an acceleration of the Detroit Board's somewhat slow-moving discussions on the question of decentralization. The law however, cannot even be construed as a slap at the Board of Education for it provides a crucial role for the Board both in the transition to decentralization and in the

implementation of decentralization. Finally, the provisions of the act were along the lines of the Board's own discussions on decentralization.[13]

The Organizational Model: New York City

Thompson's model of organizational behavior suggests that when subjected to a heterogeneous task environment beyond its control, an organization will seek to create boundary-spanning structures within itself each of which will be delegated administrative authority over comparatively homogeneous components of that task environment. It is, therefore, interesting to note in this regard that the first step taken by New York City's Board of Education towards the decentralization of its public school system was the creation of some 30 local school districts each headed by a district superintendent. The fact that this occurred in 1960, after a decade of remarkable demographic and social changes in New York City's population, resulting for the first time in the city's history in a public school population in which a majority of students were non-white, is just what would be predicted by the organizational model. Furthermore, the Board's conception of administrative decentralization was to divide up the task of school governance along geographic neighborhood lines, rather than along the vertical lines of elementary, junior high, and high schools. If one views the task environment of the public schools as being composed of parents and other interested citizens, then it made perfect sense, according to Thompson's model, for the Board to propose administrative decentralization along neighborhood lines rather than along lines of educational

level, because the former was much more likely to homogenize the task-environmental subunits given the major demographic changes of the preceding decade.

Nevertheless, the Board of Education never really had a fair chance to show how far it was willing to go in administratively decentralizing its operations, because the events described earlier had the dual effect of transposing the issue to a demand for community control, and of removing it from the Board's consideration and placing it in the hands of political authorities at the local and state levels of government. Ultimately, the output of the political decision-making system was to require a mixed system of administrative decentralization with some elements of community control, and to make the Board of Education the supervisor and arbiter of these arrangements.

Decentralization in New York City, however, once mandated by the state legislature has displayed some of the patterns of behavior forecast by Thompson's organizational model. The Board of Education, for example, has successfully been able to manage the transition from a relatively centralizedadministrative system to a relatively decentralized one. In addition, the Board has learned, in effect, that the now 32 community school boards can be effective boundary-spanning units, because of their superior capability to deal with an increasingly heterogeneous task environment. While the Central Board retains overall control of the high schools and remains as immediate arbiter of the decentralized system, and while its meetings are often marked by the active participation of representatives of local communities who want something from the Board in terms

of policy outputs, the Community School Boards are very useful as managers and interpreters of the demands of the heterogeneous task environment. One area of educational policy in which this role of the Community School Boards has been particularly visible and of importance, has been in the area of collective bargining between the Board of Education and the United Federation of Teachers.

From 1960 through 1968 the UFT was quite successful in using its contract with the Board of Education as a significant tool in making itself felt on issues of educational policy. By 1968, the UFT had seen many provisions written into its collective bargaining agreement which are more traditionally regarded not as working conditions but as matters of educational policy. Limitations on class size, teacher-pupil ratios, funds to be spent for special programs in "More Effective Schools" are certainly at least as much policy issues as working conditions. One estimate is that the UFT contract constrains 80% of educational policy making in New York City.[14] It seems to me, as George LaNoue and I have argued elsewhere,[15] that teacher unions ought, therefore, to exercise some self-restraint or be subjected to some external restraints, in the range of issues which they negotiate in collective bargaining agreements. Such restraints have begun to be applied in New York City by the participation of representatives of the Community School Boards on the Board of Education bargaining team sitting opposite the UFT team. The Community School Board representatives can be effective in this function only because of their crucial role as boundary-spanners: processing the demands of the heterogeneous task-environment and making them known to the central decision-making core.

The decentralization statute adopted by the New York State Legislature in 1969 included a provision that the Community School Boards be consulted with respect to collective bargaining on matters affecting their interests. Significantly, Albert Shanker, president of the UFT, claims responsibility for the inclusion of this provision in the statute, feeling that since it would ultimately be the Community School Boards (CSBs) which would be implementing the contract on a day-to-day basis, it was important to have their consultation and acquiescence in the collective bargaining process.[16] Clearly, Shanker recognized the crucial boundary-spanning functions that the CSBs perform under decentralization.

In order to implement this statutory provision, each of the 31 CSBs selects one of its members to sit on a representative body, known as the Consultative Council. This Council, in turn, selects three of its own to sit on the Board of Education bargaining team along side the two designated representatives of the Central Board.[17] No major policy decisions are made with respect to collective bargaining strategies and goals without the Consultative Council's participation.[18] Even though it is too early to be able to make any definitive conclusions, analysis of the 1972 teachers contract negotiations appears to offer hopeful signs to those who would like to see the range of issues included in the UFT's contract limited. Most of the credit for this development belongs to the Community School Boards as they have performed this key element of their boundary-spanning function.

In July, 1972, two months before the expiration of the UFT's previous three-year contract, the Board of Education sent the UFT a list of 49 counterdemands of its own. While this tactic may not be

unique in public sector labor relations, it was unusual, and there is no doubt that the CSBs were responsible for many of these demands. These demands also received support from two influential city-wide education interest groups: the Public Education Association (PEA) and the United Parents Association (UPA). The UPA, in fact, urged parent associations in each district to develop a list of "parent contract demands" which were transmitted to the community board representatives, the Board of Education, and the UFT, and were discussed at the bargaining table. The PEA focused its efforts on providing research and public relations materials to counter union demands.[20] Significant research may be done on the boundary-spanning functions of these organizations.

Thus, for the first time in the history of teacher collective bargaining in New York City, there emerged a countervailing and informed opposition to UFT goals. And it was successful, at least in part. While the terms of the new three year contract were certainly favorable to teachers in terms of increased salaries (given federal Phase II wage-price guidelines), the union won no significant improvements in working conditions, a departure from the precedents of previous contracts. If anything, the initiative seemed to flow in the direction of the school administration, for while the CSB's won only one major substantive victory in the negotiations, they did win several symbolic victories which may signal a reversal in the UFT's ability to use its collective bargaining contract as a means of influencing educational policy-making. On the issue of excessive absences by teachers on Mondays and Fridays, the 1972 contract includes a statement that school principals may investigate

abuses of sick-leave and try to correct them; on the misuse by teachers of preparation period time, the 1972 contract says that those periods are intended for professional work. These two symbolic victories are especially important when one considers that labor unions almost never have to back track even when abuses are apparent (eg. railroad featherbedding). In addition, the CBSs won a double-barrel substantive victory in the area of the union's pet project, the More Effective Schools program. First, a ruling by the New York City Corporation Counsel held that the preamble of the 1969 UFT contract, which contained a statement of support for MES, was not legally binding on the Board of Education. Second, in a hard fought attempt to protect MES in the 1972 contract, the UFT met the united resistance of the CSBs, and lost on this issue.[21]

The Community School Boards had thrown down the gauntlet, at least symbolically, and had let it be known that they could and would participate, with the aid of their new-found allies in the community and among education interest groups, as potent adversaries to the UFT across the bargaining table. And interestingly enough, while Albert Shanker freely acknowledged that the union had not won the improvements in conditions it had sought, he did pay tribute to the participation of the representatives of the CSBs, saying that 1972's round of contract talks was "the most interesting negotiations we have ever been through. The fear we had that decentralization might make negotiations impossible did not come true."[22] To the UFT's Delegate Assembly he said, "The three community school board representatives functioned well and were a great plus--they were able to return to the community school board members and interpret to them what some of the difficulties were."[23]

Somewhat more ominously, Shanker also remarked that there were some (unspecified) things which the CSBs wanted to take away, which they would have achieved "only over the UFT's dead body." Nevertheless, even Shanker admitted that the inclusion of Community School Board representatives at the bargaining table caused the UFT to back off in the scope of the issues it sought to negotiate.[24] And clearly, Shanker, who is an astute politian, recognized that the CSBs had found their role as boundary-spanning units.

The Organizational Model: Detroit

The decentralization of Detroit's public schools into eight regions effective January 1, 1971, is extraordinarily difficult to evaluate in terms of the organizational model, and therefore the utility of that model as an explanatory one for events in Detroit after the initial implementation of decentralization is quite narrowly restricted pending further investigation. Therefore, only a few comments are offered here.

Any discussion of the effects on school organizational structure since the inception of system-wide decentralization needs to take account of at least two factors independent of or tangential to the fact of the eight new Regional Boards. First, is the new character of the Central Board. Instead of there being a seven person Board each of whose members is elected at-large, there are now thirteen members: five elected at-large; the other eight chosen by selecting from each of the eight regions the one person who obtained the greatest number of votes in his or her regional election. This person, not so incidentally, also serves as chairperson of the

Regional Board. Because of the pattern of participation in the November, 1970 school board elections, combined with the success of the white homeowners Citizen's Committee for Better Education in having five of the candidates it supported becoming the top vote-getters in their respective regions, the ideological complexion of the Regional Board delegate-representatives on the Central Board is decidedly more conservative than was the pre-August, 1970 Board of Education. In addition, the recall, precipitated by an integrationist districting plan for the decentralized regions, in August, 1970, of four of the board members who were the nucleus of the liberal working majority of that Board, had the effect of increasing the hold of political conservatives on the new at-large Central Board seats. Thus, the new Board, which took office on January 1, 1971, was much less ideologically and politically amenable to the claims and influence of traditional liberal groups than had been its predecessor Board.

Second, any discussion of organizational modifications under school decentralization in Detroit needs to take account of the complex of litigation still in progress over the integration of that city's public schools. This litigation arose out of the promise by the NAACP, which it fulfilled, to take the matter to the courts if the state legislature repealed the Detroit Board of Education's integrationist districting plan of April 7, 1970. When the legislature did nullify that plan in July, the NAACP instituted a suit in August. While a comprehensive discussion of this litigation is beyond the scope of this paper, and would, besides, be premature because the apparently final outcome is now pending before the U. S. Supreme Court, two points should be made. First, the NAACP's suits

have served to continue the linkage of the policy of school decentralization with one's attitudes towards the racial integration of public schools in Detroit. This linkage presents the researcher with the additional difficulty of having to separate the effects of school decentralization (e.g. on the effectiveness of the Regional Boards as boundary-spanners) from the effects of the integration controversy (e.g. are Regional Board activities a result of school decentralization per se, or an artifact of their role in the integration litigation?).

Second, while decentralization in Detroit has continued to be controversial, particularly because of its linkage with the racial integration and cross-busing issues, the fact that the resulting conflicts have been channeled into the judicial arena, the specialty of which is the resolution of conflict, is one of the reasons that the school decentralization issue has never been as divisive in Detroit as it was in New York City.

What then may be said about the course of decentralization in Detroit and of its effects on the creation of boundary-spanning structures? In these terms, decentralization has, thus far, failed in Detroit in its objective of creating greater political participation by the black community. It may well have succeeded in creating greater participation among Polish-Americans, white homeowner groups, housewives, anti-integrationists, and the like, but undeniably, black participation is less than it had been under the pre-recall seven member Board of Education. It does not, however, appear that this situation need be final. With greater organization in the black community, and greater efforts from organized labor in Detroit, two

very potent political forces, the black community may well, in the near future, be represented in proportion to its numbers in Detroit, which may help to create an ideological turnabout on Detroit school boards.

For advocates of meaningful community control, however, one fairly encouraging development began to occur about October, 1971, with the creation of school-community councils. These are committees for each school in the Detroit system, comprised of parent, teacher, and student representatives, presumably with parents dominating in each of these councils. Their role is seen as partially analogous to that of the former parent-teacher associations, but the hope is that these councils will not suffer the domination by teachers that had been characteristic of past PTAs, and that they will serve as vital forces for encouraging the Regional Board to seek greater power for themselves from the Central Board and to serve as viable political agents to place pressure on the Central Board and on the state legislature to grant greater authority and power to the Regional Board It is a little early, at this stage, to evaluate the success of these groups in their proposed boundary-spanning function, but the fact of their existence alone is encouraging to those who would like to see greater community control.[25] Furthermore, insofar as the school-community councils become successful participants in regional school policy-making, their actions will place further constraints on the ability of the Detroit Federation of Teachers to influence educational policy-making. Because she is aware of this potentiality, DFT President Mary Ellen Riordan is highly suspicious and afraid of these advisory groups, and particu-

larly so at the apparent delegation of powers by the Regional Boards to these councils. She fears that union collisions with these groups may result, or that they will be the root cause of union difficulties with the Regional Boards, although no such calamities are yet apparent.

Finally, therefore, in terms of nurturing the creation of boundary-spanning structures to deal with an increasingly heterogeneous environment, decentralization of schools in Detroit is at best a qualified success. Certainly, some groups in the task environment are more effectively having their demands channeled to the administrative core, but these are not the same groups that the most ardent proponents of community control and of administrative decentralization thought would benefit from such a restructuring of the system of educational governance.

Footnotes

[1]In the case of Detroit, any statements about the stability and/or persistence of the present organizational structure are subject to the caveat that much hinges on the forthcoming United States Supreme Court decision in the Detroit cross-busing case.

[2]David O'Shea, "Theoretical Perspectives on School District Decentralization," a paper prepared for the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association at Chicago, Illinois, on April 19, 1974.

[3]The following discussion of the sequential model relies heavily on O'Shea, Ibid., and on Jay D. Scribner and David O'Shea, "Political Development in Urban School Districts," a draft for the NSSE Yearbook, 1974.

[4]James D. Thompson, Organizations in Action: Social Science Bases of Administrative Theory (New York City: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967).

[5]See for example: George R. LaNoue and Bruce L. R. Smith, The Politics of School Decentralization (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1973), which goes into considerable detail to establish the political, social, and demographic contexts in which school decentralization was considered and implemented in five cities.

[6]David O'Shea, loc. cit.

[7]The following account follows LaNoue and Smith, op. cit., as well as my own work in the history of New York City school decentralization.

[8]Quoted in LaNoue and Smith, Ibid., p. 176.

[9]These data are from: Division of School-Community Relations, Facts with Figures: Detroit Public Schools, 1971 (Detroit: The Board of Education of the School District of the City of Detroit: Publication 1-7 INF, n.d.), pp. 16-18.

[10]Detroit News, February 26, 1969.

[11]Detroit News, April 9, 1969.

[12]Quoted in the Detroit Teacher, June, 1969.

[13]Detroit Free Press, June 12, 1969.

[14]Interview with Marilyn Gittell, January 3, 1974.

[15]George R. LaNoue and Marvin R. Pilo, "Teacher Unions and Educational Accountability," Unionization of Municipal Employees: Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, XXX, no. 2 (December, 1970), pp. 146-158.

[16]Interview with Albert Shanker, January 4, 1974.

[17]Interview with Jerrold Mehlman, Deputy Director of the Office of Staff Relations, New York City Board of Education, July 27, 1973.

[18]Interview with Michael J. Costelloe, aide to the president of the New York City Board of Education, December 26, 1973.

[19]See the New York Teacher, July, 1972 and August, 1972.

[20]LaNoue and Smith, op. cit., pp. 221-222.

[21]This discussion of the 1972 contract negotiations draws on interviews with Fred Nauman, Special Assistant to the President of the United Federation of Teachers, January 31, 1973, with Fred M. Hechinger, the New York Times, February 6, 1973, and on a series of articles by Bernard Bard prepared for publication in the New York Post, to which their author kindly granted me pre-publication access.

[22]New York Times, September 8, 1972.

[23]New York Teacher, September 17, 1972.

[24]Interview with Albert Shanker, January 4, 1974.

[25]Detroit News, November 12, 1971.